

singer. He became acquainted with her personally at Easter 1907. The relationship grew closer and closer in the course of many visits to the opera and walks together.

A few of Berg's letters of this time have survived, and they show very clearly the point he had reached in his artistic development. Their 'matter-of-factness' is also highly remarkable, in contrast to the 'romantic' outpourings of the letters to Watznauer. The letters are addressed to a young girl—the daughter of an American business friend of Alban's father—who had spent the summers of 1903 and 1904 as a guest in the Berghof. For the most part the letters consist of enthusiastic descriptions of Gustav Mahler's work. The following passages are of general significance.

End of July 1907: ' . . . This year I completed my counterpoint studies with Schönberg, and am very happy to have earned his approval (as I found out by chance). Now, next autumn, comes "composition". This summer I am to work hard, partly composing out of the blue (I am making a piano sonata for my own benefit like this) and partly repeating the counterpoint (6- to 8-part choruses and a fugue with two themes for string quintet and piano accompaniment). Naturally, I enjoy it all very much—and that's necessary; if I didn't enjoy it I'd never be able to do it! And of course Schönberg's enormous ability gives one a grandiose panoramic view of the whole literature of music, and a healthy and accurate judgment besides. And that's *good*! For our taste is all too easily corrupted by all the music that's simply flung together these days—and then highly praised by newspapers and public. Something really good is acknowledged only later on—if it happens early it's mostly just a matter of fashion! The masses have now arrived at R. Wagner—he deserves it!! They only respect the earlier masters—Bach, Beethoven, Mozart—because it would be a scandal if they didn't. But I wouldn't like to look into the souls of these people who applaud a Bach concerto, a late Beethoven quartet or even a Mozart aria or minuet with such enthusiasm, for fear of seeing the deadly boredom there.

This situation is most clearly apparent in the public's understanding—or rather, misunderstanding—of Brahms, who in *his* way—Lieder, piano music, chamber music, even the symphonies and masses, etc.—did things at least as great as what Wagner did in opera, and yet he seemed unspeakably boring to the public and now shares the fate of Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, etc. i.e. one *acts* enthusiastic!!! Well, ten years ago Richard Strauss coined the phrase about the “bogged (philistine) Wagnerians” whom he regards as the most dangerous enemies of music, more dangerous even than the race of people who always send the old classics into the breach. For those are the ones who always say when they hear something new: “We Wagnerians, we are certainly up-to-date, nobody can say we hang onto the Old (it was we, after all, who introduced even Hugo Wolf and Bruckner to the public and made them comprehensible) . . .” And then it's easy after such a beautifully prepared premise to deal a clever blow to anything really modern, really *new*, however great and significant it may be. And the public falls for it—they fall for it gladly because they are just as ignorant and philistine as the pen-pushers who have just arrived at Wagner—pen-pushers for the newspapers or pen-pushers on music paper, it is all the same!! . . .’

And on 18th November 1907: ‘. . . and now for literature: Wedekind—the really new direction—the emphasis on the sensual in modern works!! You have sharp eyes, dear Miss Frida! This trait is at work in all new art. And I believe it is a good thing. At last we have come to the realization that sensuality is not a weakness, does not mean a surrender to one's own will. Rather is it an immense strength that lies in us—the pivot of all being and thinking. (Yes; all thinking!) In this I am declaring firmly and certainly the great importance of sensuality, for everything spiritual. Only through the understanding of sensuality, only through a fundamental insight into the “depths of mankind” (shouldn't it rather be called the “heights of mankind”?) can one arrive at a real idea of the human psyche. This achievement, mastered first by Medicine

and Psychology understandably enough, is now making its way slowly into Jurisprudence, God be praised, and there it will produce the most wonderful fruits for humanity (I need only mention two names: Lombroso and Krafft-Ebing). But from earliest times it has always been the case that that which the whole world has assimilated only gradually was *inborn* in the great spiritual heroes, the geniuses of the world. And now I could list you a whole herd of names and you would immediately remember how significant—yes, and often decisive—was the rôle played by sensuality in their creations. Homer! How he traces back all action, even that of the gods—i.e. the most spiritual characters—to their sensual feelings, often of the most primitive sort! And is Shakespeare any different?? Isn't he the greatest knower of men and therefore the greatest poet?! And Goethe must be mentioned!!! Why then shouldn't we, the newer ones—who have at last arrived at consciousness of what the great men of old only realized instinctively—why shouldn't we hold fast to this great knowledge!!! That's why men like Strindberg and Wedekind are great psychologists—knowers of men in the truest sense of the word. Whether they are also great poets, that is a matter that posterity will have to decide; I believe it . . . '

And from the same letter some remarks that are very characteristic of Berg's creative nature: ' . . . If possible, I have become even more shy of men and even less capable of taking a leading position in life. I only feel happy when I can quietly pursue my life of work, untouched by the noise and bustle of the outside world. Only then can I find the possibility and delight of writing. Only then can I find satisfaction and a supportable life! That's why the recent concert in which, as you will see from the enclosed programme, some things of mine were included, make an impression more painful than pleasing on my sensibilities, despite the fact that I enjoyed a certain success. I can say frankly that my fugue was the most successful piece of the evening, although things were performed that were on a much higher plane. That's the public for you! I could see it

best in the case of my three songs. The best one (from 'Traumgekrönt') did not please anyone—the crowd was enthusiastic about the weakest one ('Nachtigall'). So you will not be surprised, Miss Frida, that I have no respect whatever for the "crowd" and am happy when I can keep out of their way.'

The concert mentioned in the letter represents Berg's first public appearance as a composer. It was an evening devoted to compositions by Schönberg's pupils in the Saal des Gremiums of the Wiener Kaufmannschaft on 7th November 1907. Berg was represented in the programme with three songs ('Liebesode', 'Die Nachtigall', 'Traumgekrönt', sung by Elsa Pazeller, accompanied by Karl Horwitz) and a Double Fugue for String Quintet with Piano Accompaniment (after the Manner of a Continuo) in which he himself played the piano part. On the same evening works by Horwitz, Ivanow, Jalowetz, Webern, Weyrich, Stein and Wilma von Webenan were also performed. The audience included Alma Maria Mahler and Alexander Zemlinsky. The only traceable review (in the *Neuen Wiener Journal*) runs as follows: 'Eight different talents—what they have in common is the rare seriousness of their aspirations. All matters to do with the craft of compositional technique, rules of harmony, polyphonic voice-leading are handled with impressive sureness, and by some with real virtuosity. The sense for the character of sound-effects is always on the alert; in some composers one notices a remarkable talent for the logical construction of forms. There is conspicuous resistance against light-fingered effects. The valuable results of good training are respect for art, purity of feeling, sureness of style. It is wonderful how Schönberg's powerful and original personality guides the talents of these pupils strongly and surely in this way.' Never again has such a favourable and understanding judgment been expressed by an outsider on the subject of Schönberg's teaching in Vienna.

In the autumn of 1907 Gustav Mahler's work in Vienna came to an end. Paul Stefan has given a lively description of the details of his farewell in his chronicle 'Das Grab in Wien'